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ABSTRACT

Designed to provide logical guidelines and to outline optimum conditions for the conservation of a research library collection, this "mock" policy statement can be modified to a particular library's situation. It includes principles of conservation and elements of a comprehensive conservation program, such as collection maintenance, and organization of a conservation department. A selection of 64 readings provides the basis for further study of conservation administration in a research library. (Author)

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A CONSERVATION POLICY STATEMENT FOR RESEARCH LIBRARIES

by

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NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION

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ABSTRACT

Despite the fact that methods are available to combat the conservation problems facing research libraries, many libraries have not acted. Part of this inaction can be attributed to the complexities of the problem and inadequacies of present technology, but a larger share of the blame must be aimed at the lack of a philosophical framework for conservation. This paper serves as a "mock" policy statement designed to provide logical guidelines and outline optimum conditions for the conservation of a research library collection. Individual libraries may modify it to their own particular situations. The policy statement includes principles of conservation and elements of a comprehensive conservation program, such as collection maintenance, treatment, disaster preparedness, outreach and education, and organization of a conservation department. A selection of 61 readings provides the basis for further study of conservation administration in a research library.

PREFACE

The assumption that the conservation of library materials is good and necessary and need not be justified further forms the basis for this policy statement. Thus, the only recognized deterrents to conservation are lack of funds and confusion regarding a philosophical framework for conservation. In other words, no one knows quite what or how much to do, and there is no money to do it anyway.

A small number of major libraries have comprehensive conservation programs and separate departmental status for conservation; others are in various stages of formulating programs; and many more are recognizing the need as evidenced by attendance at ALA RTSD preservation meetings and at seminars and courses, and by the amount of inquiries directed to leaders in the field. Additionally, the Library of Congress has recently started planning for the National Preservation Program, and the National Conservation Advisory Council has published a report on national needs in libraries and archives conservation. There are many other examples, but it suffices to say that either conservation is an idea whose time has come, or those who cannot get excited about computers are searching for something equally mystifying, complicated and trendy--but less threatening.

Despite the popularity of the subject, librarianship has yet to develop logical guidelines for conservation policy. The experts disagree and are looked upon with suspicion since few of them are librarians; the problem is complicated, depressing and insidious (it appears that books are deteriorating from the inside out!); and the whole thing sounds expensive. This is not a new, flashy service for impressing trustees and boards; it is simply taking care of what we have.

This "mock" policy statement is designed to provide optimum conditions for the conservation of a research library collection. It is purposely brief and, I hope, clear and concise. The assumption is made that a budget for conservation has already been allocated and that conditions exist for necessary improvements and changes. It was personally more fun to outline a positive program (even if fictional and wildly unrealistic) than to describe the very

real limitations. My thanks go to Paul N. Banks and Frazer G. Poole for their comments and criticisms of this policy statement.

Libraries attempting to formulate conservation programs need specific guidelines, but existing written statements are more plea than policy. Stated simply, if a research library wants to preserve its collection, this paper describes what it should be doing.

CONSERVATION POLICY STATEMENT

Philosophy for Preservation Conservation Restoration

Policies for the conservation of library materials affect every department in the library. Conversely, the way in which library materials are treated throughout the system affects their longevity. Conservation entails balancing the protection an item receives with its use.

Definition of Terms

The library strives to provide a comprehensive conservation program for its collections consistent with its needs, goals and objectives. The program encompasses a complex system of plans, policies, procedures, job allocations and resources required to implement, where appropriate, the preservation, conservation and restoration of those materials maintained for the use of the educational and research community the library serves.

"Preservation," for the library's purposes, is the action taken to prevent, stop or retard deterioration; "conservation" means maintaining, in usable condition, each item in the collection; and "restoration" implies returning the deteriorated item to its original or near-original condition. "Information preservation," as opposed to preservation of the physical object, consists of reformatting materials in order to preserve their intellectual content.

An active conservation program encourages respect for the library and its collections, reduces the loss of materials through neglect or carelessness, and conserves resources through the application of preventative and restorative measures. Conservation is a logical addition to the process of selecting, acquiring, cataloging and disseminating library materials.

The conservation policy statement formulates specific guidelines and outlines the distribution of responsibilities in order to provide optimum conditions for the conservation of the collections which are in keeping with the library's organization, policies and existing conservation knowledge and techniques.

This general policy statement pertains to collections housed in the stacks, departmental libraries and the undergraduate library. Other special collections develop policies, based on their particular situation, through consultation with the conservator and the conservation librarian.

Principles of Conservation

The conservation program is based on several broad principles:

1. Conservation is expensive.
2. Conservation is essential in a research library.
3. Treatment of each item category of materials is based on careful examination with regard to ethical, aesthetic and economic considerations.
4. Decisions to treat individual items or whole collections are made jointly by the conservator and the librarian curator responsible for the material. Selection of the most suitable treatment is a decision initiated by the librarian (who is in the best position to know the item's value and intended use) and based on the advice of the conservator, who is responsible for chosing the best combination of methods and materials.
5. A distinction is made between ephemeral items, rare or unique materials, and materials of permanent research value. This distinction forms the basis for decisions concerning retention of the original format versus preservation of the intellectual content.
6. All materials used for the treatment of library materials are permanent and nondestructive.
7. Nothing is done to a rare or unique item that cannot be undone, i.e., the treatment is reversible.
8. The library cannot justify indefinite storage of unusable library materials.

Priorities of the Conservation Program

The following list of priorities of the conservation program is based on balancing those activities designed to have the most significant and immediate impact on the condition of the collection with those designed to provide the library with a logical, unified and well-organized long-range operating program.

1. Stop destructive practices in the library.
2. Install environmental controls in the general stacks and departmental libraries, including systems for filtration of particulate matter and absorption of gaseous pollutants, air-conditioning, humidity control, and protection against the effects of ultraviolet rays.
3. Educate the library staff to recognize items needing treatment and to cease thoughtless practices.
4. Identify and isolate those materials in immediate danger.
5. Isolate items too brittle to circulate.
6. Implement broad policies for the conservation of the collections.
7. Formulate specific objectives based on the policies and goals of the conservation program.
8. Assign priorities to items needing treatment and develop procedures for treatment.

Categories of Materials

The purpose of the following categories of materials is to aid the librarian and conservator in making decisions, setting priorities and developing procedures:

1. research collections (materials of permanent research value);
2. departmental collections (collections that circulate frequently, receive heavy use within the building, and contain duplicates);

3. ephemeral materials (materials that will be thrown out, superseded or reformatted, i.e., those that receive either heavy or light use);
4. special collections (rare books, archive and manuscript collections, unique items, items of local significance, or the library or collection of a noted individual); and
5. items or collections that are especially vulnerable due to their format or subject matter.

Collections Maintenance

Routine preventative measures are central to the conservation program and include environmental control of storage areas, policies for the handling of materials, and schedules for cleaning and minor repairs. Well-organized and well-monitored maintenance procedures will prevent needless deterioration.

Environmental Controls

Optimum temperatures are 70°F in the stacks, 72°F in the departmental libraries, and 60°F in limited-access storage areas. Relative humidity is kept at 50% with a diurnal variation of 3% and a seasonal variation of 6%.

Incoming and recirculated air is treated at the intake lines to filter particulate matter and absorb gaseous pollutants. Systems should be at least 90% efficient.

Fluorescent tubes in areas where books are stored should contain UV filters or be fitted with UV filtering sleeves. Daylight in storage areas is eliminated and lights left off as much as possible.

Environmental control systems are maintained through periodic monitoring and recalibration schedules according to system specifications. Frequent fluctuations in temperature and humidity are undesirable; constant conditions should be maintained year-round.

Environmental control systems within the library should not exceed the capabilities of the maintenance department to service them. If it is difficult for maintenance crews to service the system, they may decide not to bother. Each system should be equipped with built-in monitors so that nonmaintenance library personnel can periodically determine its effectiveness.

Plastic-base Materials

Although efforts to preserve library materials emphasize paper problems, increased use of microforms as documents, preservation microfilming of deteriorated paper collections, and the appearance of magnetic tapes and reels have produced additional and equally complicated conservation problems. Commonly known as "audiovisual" or "nonbook" materials, these documents have a plastic base and so their conservation problems are similar. Plastic-base materials require a strictly controlled storage environment, regular inspection, use of inert storage containers, and assurance that no residual chemicals are present after processing.

Handling of the original document is minimized by the production of service copies.

Machines for the use of plastic-base materials receive regular maintenance and cleaning.

Exhibits and Loans

Exhibits including material from the permanent collections requires approval of the conservator or conservation librarian to ensure that the materials are not displayed in a destructive manner.

Exhibits including photographs will utilize prints, not originals. The microenvironment of exhibit cases will meet temperature and humidity specifications determined by the conservation department. At no time are exhibit cases to be located in direct daylight or under fluorescent lights without UV filters. Overall light will be controlled to the minimum level acceptable for viewing.

No item will be loaned unless its physical condition is stable. Procedures for packaging and mailing interlibrary loans will meet conservation department specifications; rare books will be packed by the conservation department.

Photocopying

Photographic service procedures include specifications designed to minimize damage to fragile materials. Because of both the practice of oversewing and the prevalence of narrow inner margins, books must often be forced open on the photocopying machine, thus increasing the likelihood of damage to the binding and the paper.

Photocopying of materials from the permanent collections is supervised by a staff member. Materials too fragile to withstand face-down copying are not photocopied. Training of the photocopy staff includes orientation in the conservation department.

Shelving

Books are meant to stand upright (except for large folios). Leaning books causes undue strain on the spine, sewing and pages. By simply keeping books neat on the shelves and in an upright position, much damage can be avoided. Shelving books on their fore-edges is forbidden as it causes the contents to pull away from the covers and destroys the shape of the spine. Books awaiting shelving should not be placed on their fore-edges.

Adequate space for examination of oversize volumes will reduce damage to the volume during use. Flat storage is provided for oversize volumes.

Books should not be so tightly packed that the patron is forced to wrench the book off the shelf—and damage it in the process.

Book Returns and Conveyors

Book return and conveyor systems will meet specifications established by the conservation department. At no time will a book be returned to the library by dropping it into a box or chute.

Shifting of Materials

Shifting of materials in the bookstacks, and movement of books in general, must be done carefully to avoid damaging the materials. Major shifts of materials will only follow orientation of the crew by a member of the conservation staff.

Books are to be supported firmly by bookends or the end of the shelf to prevent them from toppling off the truck. Book trucks will meet specifications established by the conservation department.

The staff is discouraged from trying to carry too many books as it is easy to drop a whole stack—especially when the bindings have slick, pyroxylin buckram covers.

Cleaning and Maintenance in the Stacks

Collections maintenance includes systematic and regular inspection of the holdings to identify materials needing treatment. Inspection also occurs at the time a book is discharged after circulating. No book should be allowed to circulate if it is in disrepair; rush treatment of requested books is a regular procedure of a conservation department.

A continual refurbishing program is conducted in conjunction with stack inspection, which includes cleaning shelves, dusting books, treating leather volumes, doing simple on-the-spot mending, and removing harmful materials from books. Student workers in the circulation department receive orientation and training from the conservation department as part of job training.

Routine Inspection and Repair in the Departmental Libraries

Materials needing treatment in the departmental libraries are identified during reshelving and when books are discharged after circulating. Additionally, periodic systematic inspection is made of the departmental stacks, appropriate to the volume of use of the particular library.

In the interests of efficiency and economy, routine repairs are executed in the departmental libraries. These include tipping-in loose pages, tightening hinges, reattaching bookplates and pockets, and performing minor spine repairs. Departmental staff members assigned book repair duties are trained in the conservation department.

Treatment

Selection of the most appropriate treatment for a particular item is based on the item's intrinsic or artifactual value, its uniqueness, its relation to the collection as a whole, availability of a replacement, and its physical condition and intended use. These factors are weighed by consideration of the cost of repairing, restoring, discarding, duplicating, or doing nothing. Long-term cost-effectiveness is the most important aspect of treatment selection—excluding the case of rare or unique items.

Ultimate responsibility for determining whether or not to retain an item in the collection rests with those librarians involved in collections development who are expert in subject, area and language specialties, and knowledgeable about the item's use. The ultimate responsibility for the selection of treatment for that item, however, rests with the conservator.

The purpose of conservation treatment is to increase the length of time an object will be available for use and to slow down the inevitable and continual process of deterioration.

Screening

Screening for treatment is simplified and costs reduced by designating large categories of items needing treatment, thereby streamlining procedures through application, where appropriate, of mass treatments.

The process of screening is a 2-part activity, consisting of initial designation of an item for treatment followed by selection of the most appropriate treatment. Initial designation for treatment occurs at all points during the process of acquiring, cataloging and disseminating library materials:

1. new acquisitions which are unbound, unprotected, or have unusual formats;
2. incoming retrospective material in poor condition;
3. high-use, high-loss areas of the collections;
4. special collections designated for preservation by the librarian-curator;
5. materials designated for treatment during routine stack maintenance or systematic stack inspection;
6. reviewing of returned materials;
7. materials found to be in need of treatment during shelf-reading or shelving; and
8. recommendations of the conservation department.

Commercial Binding

A commercial bindery provides an important service to a library, but as a profit-making, mass-production enterprise it cannot deal with books on an individual basis, and it is limited by current technology and the availability and cost of labor and materials. As a result, the responsibility rests with the library to demand good materials and quality workmanship.

The system of bid-letting for contractual services can work against the library's objective of securing quality workmanship. There is no such thing as a cheap, quality product. The conservation department works closely with the purchasing department to ensure that binding specifications are written that provide the library with a wide range of commercial services utilizing quality materials and techniques.

A visit by the conservation librarian to the vendor's premises is prerequisite to the awarding of the contract. Commercial bindery shipments are regularly inspected to see that contract agreements are being met. Selection of sewing method is the most important aspect of binding; the conservation librarian should impress upon the vendor the necessity of library input in this crucial area.

Commercial binding schedules are designed to minimize the time an item is unavailable for use, regardless of convenience to the vendor or the binding preparation division. A system of recall is built into binding preparation procedures so that needed items can be retrieved.

An annual trip is made to the commercial bindery to acquaint bindery preparation staff with the entire process. Library staff responsible for selecting items for commercial binding must be familiar with procedures and trade language in order to make appropriate decisions.

Time- and money-saving automation procedures developed by the commercial bindery are utilized where appropriate. The conservation department will encourage the commercial

bindery to introduce flexible, nondestructive binding techniques and to review any products they offer in terms of the library's needs and good binding practices.

Repair and In-house Binding

While there are many similarities in bookmaking, each book in need of repair is unique. Binding materials and structure vary, as does paper quality. Each book has its own history of use and abuse.

Strict adherence to preventative measures and commonsense treatment of library materials will reduce the number of repairs necessary. Routine repair and rebinding procedures are highly developed to reduce the amount of time an item is unavailable. Detailed specifications are prepared for materials to be used in binding and repair.

Initial decision-making regarding repairs or binding structure is centralized, although staff members make suggestions based on a more thorough examination of an individual item. When it is reasonable to do so, the original binding is retained and restored.

Mass-production techniques are utilized to save time and money, but an individual staff member will perform all the operations on a single book.

Repairs on books from the general collections are minimal; they are designed to protect the book and make it usable. Cosmetic repairs are discouraged. Exceptions are made for books of special interest due to their binding, illustrations or subject matter. These exceptions are determined under the direction of the conservator.

Books unsuitable for commercial binding due to their intrinsic or aesthetic value, fragility or format are bound or rebound in-house.

Inspection of finished items is centralized to ensure quality.

Conservation and Restoration Rebinding

Very few books rebound in the conservation department will warrant the expense of a conservation or restoration binding. The decision to rebind a valuable book is made by the librarian curator with the advice of the conservator. Valuable books with destructible bindings are also candidates for rebinding.

A conservation binding is composed of permanent and durable materials with a structure designed to protect the text during use. It is also important that the structure be as long-lasting as possible to avoid the cost and probable damage of another rebinding. The appearance of the binding should be sympathetic with the period of the book's production. Items selected for conservation binding have often been previously rebound using low-quality materials and techniques, with none of the original binding remaining.

A restoration of the original binding attempts to duplicate the book's original, or near-original, condition and can be justified in cases where the integrity of the artifact is of bibliographic, historic or aesthetic significance.

Simply providing a protective box is a viable alternative to rebinding; rebinding disrupts artifactual and bibliographic evidence and is employed only when the object cannot be

preserved in its present condition, or when even minimal use will cause further deterioration.

Conservation and restoration rebinding imply the use of permanent materials, proven methods of treatment, and ease of disassembly—should the last become desirable or necessary at a later date.

Documentation of the book's original condition and subsequent treatment is provided by photographs, an estimate of the cost of treatment, a written case history, and a binder's slip attached to the volume. Fragments of the original binding are retained, boxed with the books in special situations, or filed.

Protective Encasement

A box protects a valuable book from further damage by providing a microenvironment, i.e., a buffer against fluctuations in temperature and humidity, and protection from dust, light and atmospheric gases. This implies a perfect fit, ease of removal and use of permanent materials. The materials and structure of a box depend on the size and weight of the book and the length of time the box is expected to last.

When precisely fitted to the dimensions of an individual book, a box eliminates further damage from abrasion or movement on the shelf. Boxes provide additional protection in the event of a disaster or accident.

Simplified boxes are made to minimize further mechanical damage to severely deteriorated books in cases where it is economically or technically unfeasible to treat them immediately. Simplified boxes are also made for unbound items that are used infrequently or are printed on paper that has become brittle.

Flat Paper Materials

Flat paper items are meant to be stored flat. Containers and storage for flat paper items should ensure ease of removal. Adequate table space for examination of flat items should be in proximity to the storage area.

Flat paper items are to be in contact with neutral-acid content materials only. Countless valuable materials have been irreparably damaged by being mounted on wood or cardboard, put in contact with ground wood pulp paper, or laminated with impermanent materials.

Encapsulation of flat paper items in polyester film envelopes implies prior neutralization of the paper. Exceptions are items that will be subjected to heavy use but are not expected to be kept indefinitely, extremely fragile items, or items for which deacidification is not appropriate.

The conservation of photographs is extremely complicated due to their diversity. Daguerreotypes, tintypes, albumen prints, collodian prints and gelatin prints are all capable of different reactions; what may be safe treatment for one may not be at all safe for another. Materials are constantly being developed which widen the range of possibilities for treatment.

Treatment of original photographs includes elimination of any residual chemicals left from processing; support, when necessary, with alkaline-buffered materials; and production of an archival-quality negative and print copy. Original photographs are matted, never mounted.

Information Preservation

Vigorous implementation of information preservation techniques is vital to the conservation program. Not all deteriorated materials warrant the expense of physical restoration. Some may be so far gone that even photographing them will cause irreparable damage. Additionally, it is unrealistic to hope that there will ever be money or time enough to restore the thousands of deteriorating volumes in the library that will be confetti before the century is over.

Every reasonable effort is made to purchase out-of-print reprint, photocopy or microform copies of items designated for preservation before resorting to in-house duplication. Cooperation with reprint publishers is encouraged and may be a means of obtaining replacements, providing it does not interfere with the library's priorities.

Microfilm, whether commercially purchased or produced in-house, should conform to all appropriate national standards for archival quality and bibliographic integrity. There is no point in switching from one impermanent medium to another. Incoming microfilm is inspected randomly to see that specifications are being met.

When a microfilm copy of an item is obtained, the original is discarded unless it has artifactual value. Microfilm copies of valuable items are made to avoid unnecessary handling of especially fragile materials; initial consultation of a bibliographically correct microfilm copy will reduce wear and tear on the original.

Master negatives are used to make duplicating masters from which copies to be used are made. Master and duplicating master negatives are stored centrally at a temperature of 65°F, relative humidity of 40% or less, and with systems installed to remove particulate matter and absorb gaseous pollutants.

The information preservation program requires careful coordination since it affects the acquisition, catalog, and serial departments. Materials generated from this program require special preparation prior to their addition to the collection, and continuing maintenance in public service departments.

Titles microfilmed in-house are reported to the *National Register of Microform Masters*, *Newspapers in Microform* or the *National Union Catalog of Manuscript Collections*—whichever is appropriate. Cooperation with other libraries will reduce unnecessary duplicate filming.

Disaster Preparedness

Large-scale damage to libraries may result from natural disasters such as earthquakes, tornadoes and floods, or from accidents such as fires or bursting pipes. Advance planning for disasters will speed the salvage operation and reduce losses.

A disaster plan for the library includes indication of priorities; detailed salvage procedures; lists of needed supplies and their specifications; floor-plans of the buildings; names of pertinent staff members and outside persons who have had actual experience in salvage operation; names and phone numbers of freezer plants and suppliers; safety precautions for personnel, the area and the materials; and the role of the insurance company. Several copies of the plan are distributed to the homes of staff members. Speed is essential to salvage; the salvage team should include someone able to cut through red tape.

Procedures are designed to save a maximum amount of materials with a minimum amount of restoration and replacement. The high costs of restoration will rarely justify the reclamation of books which are in print and or replaceable; however, every item should be salvaged, frozen and vacuum-dried so that calculations of the extent of loss can be made as a basis for compensation and replacement. Since drying is expensive, it may be desirable to freeze materials with separators so that some sorting of frozen materials can be done prior to drying.

Much of the damage occurring in libraries today is the result of poor maintenance of old plumbing, leaks in the roof, or careless placement of air-conditioning or ventilation ducts. Pipes in stack areas should be well sealed and maintained. Cooling towers for air-conditioning and vents for humidity controls should not be placed directly over stacks.

Stairways to the stacks should remain closed between floors. A system of nonaqueous fire control (Halon 1301) is installed in the main library stacks, the rare book room, and archives. The release of Halon is dependent upon the triggering of two separate sensor systems as insurance against expensive false alarms.

The fire detection system is connected to an outside source. Fire officials should be cognizant of the added complications of a large collection of inflammable materials subject to rapid mold growth; of the library's internal system for detection; and of the procedural guidelines and priorities for salvage developed by the conservation department.

Outreach

The conservation program does not operate in a vacuum, but represents library-wide policies for the physical maintenance of the collections. Both patrons and staff are affected and are themselves components of the program, for if conservation policies are ignored, there is little reason for them. Additionally, the conservation of library materials is not limited by the parameters of a single library, but is part of the international goal of unlimited accessibility and dissemination of information.

The Conservation Committee

The presence of a standing conservation committee with library-wide representation which includes faculty, technical and student staff members, creates an atmosphere of shared concern and promotes coordination and cooperation throughout the library system. The committee also assists the conservation librarian in planning and giving needed support for the implementation of conservation policies.

Educating the Library Staff

Before there can be conservation of library materials there must be an atmosphere to support it. Since people who handle hundreds of books each day tend to treat them like so much merchandise, the library staff is a major element in the deterioration of library materials. They often do not realize that through inadequate storage conditions, mishandling, and haphazard "repairs" they are wasting money and jeopardizing future service. The subsequent damage is the result of ignorance, not purposeful destruction, and can be eliminated by "consciousness-raising" of the staff.

Orientation for all new employees includes a personal tour of the conservation department by one of its staff members. This may include slide presentations when appropriate—especially in the case of groups of new student workers.

Staff members throughout the library who have conservation responsibilities receive training in the conservation department.

Because conservation affects a broad range of library activities, the staff is encouraged to visit the conservation department. All staff members should be made aware of the services available and of the reasons behind conservation policies.

Educating Library Users

Patrons are a reflection of the library; they react to the library in a manner appropriate to its atmosphere. An active conservation program encourages respect for the library and its collections. No library that advertises "drops" for books can expect patrons to handle books carefully.

Patrons mutilate library materials out of ignorance, disrespect for the library, or dissatisfaction with library services. These motivations can be weakened through education and persuasion, logical policies, clearly posted penalties, and user-oriented services. Frustration with out-of-order photocopy machines can turn a mild-mannered patron into a vehement mutilator.

A public relations campaign on the subject of mutilation is conducted at the beginning of the fall semester. Exhibits, posters, flyers and newspaper articles are used in the campaign.

Patrons are prosecuted for the mutilation of library materials in accordance with the advice of legal counsel and appropriate local statutes. This regulation is posted in departmental libraries and the main stacks. Any orientation for patrons should include information on the expense and penalties of mutilation.

Agencies and Organizations Concerned with Conservation

Agencies and organizations involved with conservation exchange information and ideas through meetings, seminars and publications; encourage and direct research; solicit funding for research and development; and publicize common concerns and goals.

The library, through its conservation department, should be aware of or actively involved with the following:

1. National Preservation Program of the Library of Congress;

2. National Conservation Advisory Council, Study Committee on Libraries and Archives;
3. Society of American Archivists, Preservation Methods Committee;
4. Library Binding Institute;
5. American Library Association, Resources and Technical Services Division, Committee on the Preservation of Library Materials and Discussion Group on the Preservation of Library Materials;
6. Association of Research Libraries, Committee on Preservation of Library Materials;
7. American Institute for the Conservation of Historic and Artistic Works;
8. International Institute for the Conservation of Historic and Artistic Works;
9. Institute of Paper Conservation (London);
10. International Centre for the Study of the Preservation and Restoration of Cultural Property (Rome Centre);
11. Instituto di Patologia del Libro (Rome);
12. National Museum Act, administered by the Smithsonian Institution;
13. National Endowment for the Humanities;
14. Council on Library Resources; and
15. National Historic Publications and Records Commission.

Consulting, Teaching and Internships

Due to the scarcity of operating conservation programs in research libraries and the difficulty of obtaining useful, specific information in the literature of the field, the conservation department staff provides a consultation service for other area libraries and, to a limited extent, for individuals.

Workshops and seminars are held as the demand warrants, their object being to encourage libraries to formulate practical conservation policies and implement nondestructive repair techniques.

The conservation department makes available, to those with a demonstrated need, references from its collection of conservation materials, including books, articles, pamphlets, serials, catalogs and manufacturers' samples.

Since no formal training is available for library conservation, the library believes that it should make a contribution to the training of conservators, conservation technicians and librarians. Interns are accepted into the conservation department from libraries formulating conservation programs, and in conjunction with library or conservation education.

Cooperative Conservation Efforts

Many mechanisms for cooperation among libraries already exist; the problem is one of adding conservation to the agenda and defining the objectives to be achieved. The complexities of library conservation tend to cloud the central issue, i.e., that the problem is immediate and will continue to worsen. The need of a rural library system to repair books housed in a bookmobile scarcely resembles the need of a research library to have an incunabula restored, yet both libraries may lack access to treatment and funds to pay for that treatment. Although conservation, like library service, encompasses a broad spectrum of needs, libraries have basically the same goal—to provide library service to their patrons. It is on the basis of their similarities that libraries need to cooperate to achieve results.

All libraries face both the need to preserve the mass of deteriorating materials and provide treatment for individual items. Most libraries lack adequate funds for conservation. Conservation is usually a low priority and conservation responsibility is frequently scattered in a library's organization. Treatment is difficult to obtain because there are not enough specialists in the field. There are no exact published standards for storage conditions, use or treatment of library materials. Conservation in any form and for any type of library is expensive.

The library cooperates with efforts aimed at developing standards, reducing costs, utilizing scarce skills, eliminating duplication of effort, disseminating useful information, and supporting research.

Organization of the Conservation Department

The conservation department is associated with technical services because it is administratively expedient and because the majority of its functions involve the physical preparation of library materials for patron use. However, the nature of that use and the continual availability of and access to library materials is also the concern of technical services and the conservation department. These are not "behind-the-scenes" processes, but ones which dynamically reflect the purpose of the library and the use to which its collections are put.

Functions

The conservation department provides the library with a comprehensive program for the conservation of its collections, including:

1. plans, policies, procedures and guidelines for conservation;
2. specifications for environmental controls and their monitoring;
3. techniques and procedures for maintenance, binding, rebinding, repair, restoration, protective encasement, and information preservation;
4. coordination of all conservation activities in the library;
5. responsibility for the historical, ethical, aesthetic and technical components of conservation treatment;
6. liaison with the vendor holding the commercial binding contract;
7. preparation of salvage, reclamation and restoration procedures in the event of natural disaster or accident;
8. education programs for staff, patrons, other libraries and individuals;
9. cooperation with other agencies, organizations and libraries concerned with conservation;
10. measurement and evaluation of collection conditions, treatments and costs; and
11. development of a conservation reference and research collection.

Division of Responsibilities

The conservation department consists of the office of the conservation librarian and four units: collections maintenance, commercial bindery preparation, conservation treatment and preservation microfilming.

Duties of the conservation librarian are:

1. supervision and coordination of conservation department divisions;
2. liaison with other department heads and librarians;
3. recommendation of conservation policies;
4. conservation committee chair;
5. development of standards for treatment;
6. development of techniques and procedures for treatment;
7. training of staff and interns;
8. orientation tours of the conservation department;
9. commercial binding and mass deacidification specifications and contracts;
10. contact with agencies, organizations and libraries concerned with conservation;
11. supplies and equipment;
12. budget;
13. staff evaluations; and
14. annual report.

Duties of the collections maintenance division are:

1. condition surveys;
2. maintenance and cleaning of the collections;
3. training of library staff with conservation responsibilities;
4. supervision of conservation policies in the library;
5. monitoring of environmental controls; and
6. conservation, binding and mutilation exhibits.

Duties of the commercial bindery preparation division are:

1. preparation of serials and paperback books for commercial binding,
2. clerical preparation of items for commercial rebinding,
3. coordination of procedures with departmental libraries and library departments,
4. supervision of contract obligations,
5. routine contact with the vendor,
6. shipment estimates,
7. procedures for the recall of needed volumes and rush binding,
8. maintenance of the serials binding preparation file, and
9. records of contract expenditures.

Duties of the conservation treatment division are:

1. initial screening and preparation of volumes for commercial rebinding;
2. binding of single-signature pamphlets, ephemeral items and items with unusual formats;
3. rebinding of items too fragile or valuable to be commercially rebound;
4. techniques and procedures of repair, recasing, rebinding, conservation and restoration rebinding, protective encasement, deacidification, paper repair, matting and backing, and restoration of photographs;
5. routine ordering of supplies; and
6. demonstrations of conservation techniques.

Duties of the preservation microfilming division are:

1. specifications for microform quality, storage and use;
2. searching for commercially available out-of-print, reprint, photocopy or microform copies of deteriorated items;
3. cooperation with reprint publishers;
4. specifications and procedures for the purchase, production and inspection of microform master negatives, duplicating masters and use copies;
5. reporting of microform masters generated in-house; and
6. maintenance of microform equipment.

Staff

Until recently conservation has not been taught in library schools. As a result, it is not within the scope or interest of most librarians to be informed about the conservation of library materials. The conservation function in most libraries is relegated to "patch-it-up" units without professional direction, or to commercial binderies who operate to make a profit. Thus, a primary responsibility of the conservation staff is to communicate the goals of the program to library staff members who may be unfamiliar with conservation principles. Collections conservation requires the cooperation of the whole staff.

The conservation department staff is, by the nature of the task, diverse. They possess manual skills; knowledge of technological and scientific applications of conservation; cognizance of the historical, aesthetic and ethical aspects of library materials as artifacts; understanding of the function, purpose and priorities of a research library; and business, public relations and clerical expertise.

Like the staff and the task, the literature of conservation is diverse, requiring a special effort on the part of the staff to keep informed of new developments in conservation, bookbinding and reprography.

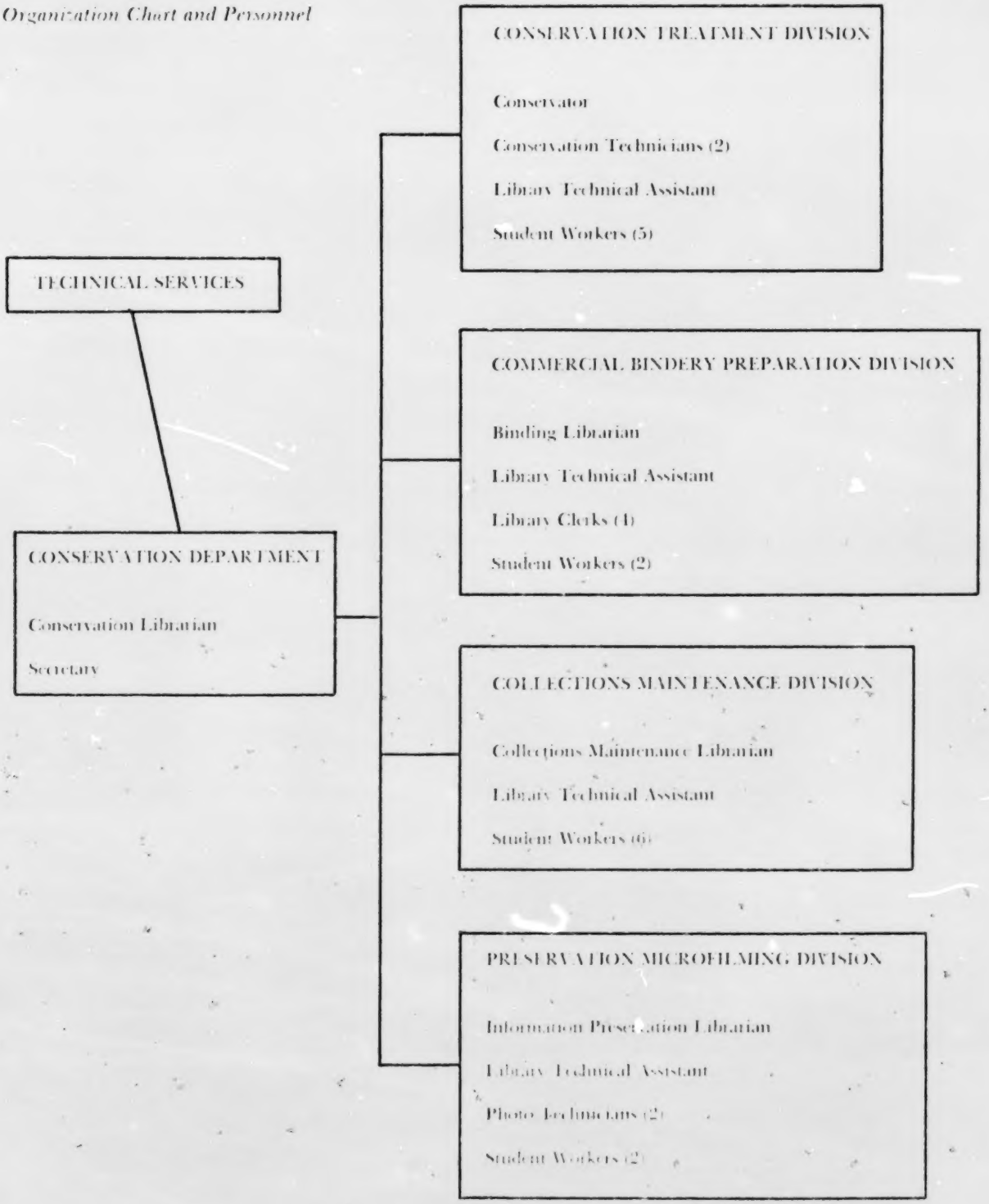
Budget

The conservation department budget consists of expenditures that are clearly identifiable conservation costs, including allowances for:

1. salaries and wages;
2. commercial binding, mass deacidification and preservation microfilming contracts;
3. equipment;
4. commodities;
5. purchase of replacements for deteriorated items;
6. office supplies and services;
7. maintenance of equipment; and
8. travel.

The costs of departmental library staff involved in conservation functions are absorbed by that library. Acquisitions relating to conservation are requested through the acquisitions department.

Organization Chart and Personnel



CONCLUDING REMARKS

Many conservators and some librarians have questioned the curious lack of interest on the part of libraries in preserving their collections. One can only conclude that libraries have been so frantically concerned with building collections that they have forgotten one of their major responsibilities—that of preserving mankind's collective memory. Stressing current use and access, libraries have jeopardized the future use of millions of volumes quietly deteriorating on the shelves or being needlessly abused.

A library's priorities are reflected in its organization and budget allocations. A library that places emphasis on conservation will provide for a formal structure within its organization, delegate sufficient authority to initiate action and carry through, and allocate a substantial amount of money to preserve those library materials on which it has already spent money to collect, describe and circulate.

Separate departmental status for conservation is an obvious solution to both the need for increased emphasis if collections are to survive, and the problems caused by overlapping activities and poor coordination among the departments in which conservation functions are presently scattered.

Administration of a comprehensive conservation program including installation and monitoring of air-conditioning and humidity control systems; appropriate facilities for in-house repair, rebinding and preservation microfilming; and maintenance of a cleaning and inspection schedule requires large expenditures of money. However, initial costs are not the only concern of a research library; costs for conservation treatment or preventative measures must be expressed in terms of long-range retention of materials of permanent research value. It was precisely a mentality of false economy that led to the introduction of wood-pulp paper and the over-sewing machine—with disastrous results for research libraries.

Short of a comprehensive conservation program, there is much that can be done to preserve library materials. A comprehensive program may be economically or philosophically indefensible; however, every library can develop a policy for conservation that consists of sensible rules for the storage and handling of library materials, stiff requirements for the contracting of commercial binding and preservation microfilming, and provisions for an efficient, nondestructive in-house repair facility. Such a policy is inexpensive to initiate and would reduce the amount of senseless and costly abuse of library materials.

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